AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for generating a desired alphanumeric character, comprising:

receiving a user's selection of a combination of one or more zones from a plurality of zones, wherein the plurality of zones are shaped and arranged so as to abut one another thereby eliminating intervening spaces to essentially form a rectangular solid block, some of the plurality of zones being ~~periphery zones that together define the periphery of the solid block~~ones that, once contrasted with others of the plurality of zones, highlight an open curve feature of a character via a complementary, rather than direct, relationship, and ~~the rest of the plurality of zones being internal zones that are within an interior region of the solid block that is enclosed by the periphery~~some others of the plurality of zones being ones that highlight, once contrasted with others of the plurality of zones, a closed curve feature of a character via a complementary, rather than direct, relationship; and

contrasting the combination with the remainder of said plurality of zones so that the ~~combination is essentially removed leaving behind a graphic symbol in the solid block that resembles the desired character~~remainder, and not the combination, comprises one or more open curve features and/or one or more closed curve features, of the desired character, which have been highlighted by the user's selection of the combination of zones.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of zones are arranged so that the periphery around them is the maximum extent of every graphic symbol that appears when a combination of one or more zones is contrasted.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of zones form a matrix of solid elements that are of the same color.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the matrix has twelve zones arranged in four rows and three columns.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3 wherein the combination of zones has no more than two zones, and wherein each one of the 26 letters of the English alphabet and 10 decimal numerals is represented by a different combination of zones.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3 further comprising providing a plurality of mnemonic aids that represent a plurality of different alphanumeric characters, wherein each aid is depicted by a matrix of said plurality of zones that shows the respective combination.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the combination of one or more of said plurality of zones is contrasted with unselected ones of said plurality of zones, as the combination is being selected by a person.

Claims 8-20 (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a machine-readable medium having ~~data~~ instructions stored therein that, when ~~accessed~~ executed by a processor, ~~maps~~ map each of a plurality of alphanumeric characters to a respective selection of one or more regions from a plurality of regions that abut one another thereby eliminating intervening spaces to form a control area that is essentially a solid block, so that ~~if~~ when the respective selection of regions ~~were to be~~ are contrasted with the remainder of the plurality of regions, then said remainder, and not said selection of regions, ~~would~~ positively ~~define~~ defines a plurality of features of a respective one of the alphanumeric characters wherein some of the plurality of regions together define the periphery of the control area which surrounds others of the plurality of regions that are in the interior of the control area, and wherein for each generated character that has a closed curve as a feature, the respective selection to which that character is mapped includes one of the interior regions of the control area.

22. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 21 wherein the ~~data is designed to allow~~ instructions allow said respective selection to be made via touch-sensitive screen inputs.

23. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 21 wherein the medium has further ~~data~~ instructions that, when ~~accessed~~ executed by the processor,

~~divides~~ divide a display surface of a touch-sensitive screen device into a two-dimensional matrix of said plurality of regions, and allows said respective selection to be made via input events on the display surface.

24. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 23 wherein the medium has further ~~data~~ instructions that, when ~~accessed~~ executed by the processor, ~~displays~~ display a graphic symbol on the display surface that is aligned with the two-dimensional matrix, wherein the graphic symbol represents an alphanumeric character that has been mapped to said respective selection, so that a user can immediately confirm whether her selection resulted in the alphanumeric character she had intended to be retrieved.

25. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 24 wherein the ~~data is to~~instructions display the graphic symbol by contrasting the selected regions with the remainder of the plurality of regions in said matrix, so that the graphic symbol as displayed is substantially coextensive with the outside boundary of said matrix and at least a part of every contrast area that allows the symbol to be viewed falls within a corresponding region that has been selected.

26. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 25 wherein the ~~data is to~~instructions display the graphic symbol using a visualization area of the display surface that has higher resolution than said matrix, so that the symbol more closely resembles the alphanumeric character.

27. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 21 wherein the ~~data is to~~instructions treat the respective selection as one for which said remainder positively defines a closed plane curve located below a left opening plane curve, as in

which features belong to the character "a", the respective selection having a first selected region being an interior region located in a lower half of an arrangement of said plurality of regions and a second selected region being a periphery region located to the left and above the first region in said arrangement.

28. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture claim 21 wherein the ~~data is to~~instructions treat the respective selection as one for which said remainder positively defines a closed plane curve located above a right opening plane curve, as in

which features belong to the character "e", the respective selection having a first selected region located in a upper half of an arrangement of said plurality of regions and a second selected region located to the right and below the first region in said arrangement.

29. (Currently Amended) An electronic system comprising:

a touch-sensitive display screen;

logic circuitry that implements an association between each of a plurality of alphanumeric characters and a respective combination of one or more regions selected from a matrix of regions that have been defined on the display screen as abutting one another to eliminate intervening spaces and form a control area that is essentially a solid block, via a user's manual action upon the touch-sensitive display screen, so that ~~if~~ when the respective combination ~~were to be~~is visually contrasted with the remainder of the matrix then said remainder and not the respective combination ~~would resemble~~resembles one of the alphanumeric characters wherein some of the plurality of regions together define the periphery of the control area which surrounds others of the plurality of regions that are in the interior of the control area, and wherein for each generated character that has a closed curve as a feature, the respective selection to which that character is mapped includes one of the interior regions of the control area; and

a power source coupled to power the display screen and said logic.

30. (Original) The system of claim 29 wherein the regions of a given combination, that is associated with a desired character, are those which are suggested by one or more features of the desired character.

31. (Original) The system of claim 30 wherein the matrix is taller than it is wide, the desired character is "a" whose features include a closed plane curve located below a left-opening plane curve, as in

and there are two regions in the given combination associated with "a", the first region being located in a lower half of the matrix and the second region being located to the left and above the first region.

32. (Original) The system of claim 30 wherein the desired character is "p" whose features include a closed plane curve located above an upside-down "L", as in

and there are two regions in the given combination associated with "p", the first region being located in an upper half of the matrix, and the second region being located to the right and below the first region.

33. (Original) The system of claim 26 further comprising logic circuitry that is to control the touch-sensitive display screen so that the respective combination is visually contrasted with the remainder of the matrix as an operator selects the combination, to produce a sensation in the operator of drawing the desired character.

Claims 34-42 (Canceled).